

## Confederation of Canadian Unions (CCU)

### Economics

**1. According to Statistics Canada, economic inequality has been on the rise since the 1970s, and currently, the richest 10% of income earners control almost 60% of all wealth. How will your party reverse this trend and reduce the growing levels of economic inequality in Ontario?**

Andrea Horwath and the NDP are committed to tackling income inequality. This means protecting middle class families by having the wealthiest people and most profitable corporations pay their fair share. An NDP government will raise income tax on amounts earned over \$220,000 by one percentage point, and on earnings over \$300,000 by two percentage points. We will also end the corporate income-tax giveaway, and return the tax rate on profits to 13%. These revenues will be used to invest in public services like our Pharamacare for Everyone and Dental Care for Everyone plans, that will make life better for all Ontarians.

A NDP government will also raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour and tie future increases to inflation. We will remove the minimum wage exemptions that allow students and servers to be paid less than every other worker in the province, because minimum means minimum.

**2. The partial sell-off of Hydro One has been a boondoggle for Bay Street, Wall Street and the investment class, and a disaster for workers and consumers. Rates have skyrocketed for Ontarians, and the Ontario Financial Accountability Office stated that taxpayers would have saved \$1.8 billion if the government had taken on traditional debt to fund infrastructure projects instead of the sell-off. Will your party commit to fully returning Hydro One back to public ownership and democratic control?**

An Ontario NDP government will lower hydro bills by 30% by getting private profits off hydro bills and returning to public power, starting by restoring Hydro One to public ownership and control. Ontario's hydro system should serve the public interest, not private investors. We will rein in Ontario's wasteful oversupply of overpriced, privatized hydro. We will renegotiate, cancel, or not renew bad private power contracts. And we will eliminate unfair rural delivery costs, end mandatory time-of-use rates, cap private profit margins, and return accountable public oversight to our hydro system.

**3. According to opinion polls, a large majority of Ontarians support greater funding for social services like health care, child care, housing and education. What will your party do to ensure these programs are properly funded in both the short and long term?**

The Ontario NDP very much agrees that public services make life better for all Ontarians. We are committed to undoing the damage of 20 years of cuts and neglect from consecutive Liberal and Conservative governments with our plans for Pharamacare for Everyone, Dental Care for Everyone, investing in affordable housing, and affordable, not-for-profit childcare.

We recognize that it is very important that our investments in services be financially sustainable, so we stop the decades-long pattern of cuts and funding freezes. In order to make our changes for the better possible, we will end the corporate income-tax giveaways. We will return the tax rate on profits to 13%

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in a fair manner that allows businesses to plan, and allows Ontario to remain competitive. We will also close a loophole that's allowing big corporations to qualify for small business exemptions.

A universal pharmacare program is one of the most sustainable ways to ensure the people of Ontario are as healthy as possible. One quarter of Ontarians have not been taking the medicine they're prescribed because of the cost. And all too often, the result is a trip to an emergency room and a hospital stay. The result is a heavier toll on their own health, and higher costs for Ontario's health services. By bringing pharmacare costs into the provincial government and exercising the buying power of 14 million Ontarians, businesses in Ontario stand to save a minimum of \$800 million and as much as \$1.9 billion each year.

The sustainability of this plan is demonstrated in the five-year medium term fiscal outlook found in our platform. This demonstrates how we will consistently lower the provincial deficit after Year Three of our mandate, with the goal of returning to balance.

### Labour

**4. Statistics Canada reports that on average, unionized workers in Ontario enjoy 24% higher wages than non-unionized workers in the same line of work, as well as stronger pensions, superior health and safety standards, longer vacation time, better health and drug benefits, and more rights in the workplace. Does your party believe that unions play a positive role in our economy? If so, what policies will your party implement to create a climate that is easier for unions to organize?**

Membership in a union is a ticket into the middle class, and we agree that unions play a positive role in our economy. Unions give people the ability to bargain for better pay, better schedules, benefits and job stability — all things that are sadly lacking in too many workplaces in Ontario. An NDP government will protect the right to join a union by making sure any workplace can unionize when 55% of workers sign a union card, which was the standard for 45 years until the last Conservative government eliminated it. We will also introduce first contract arbitration legislation that will prevent long, tactical delays by employers.

**5. Last year, Canada joined 164 other countries in ratifying International Labour Organization (ILO) convention 98, which commits governments around the world to respecting union rights and collective bargaining. Will your party commit to protecting the rights of unions to organize and bargain collectively, both in the public and private sectors?**

The NDP has always been a proud supporter of the rights of unions to organize and bargain collectively. We have seen countless examples of strikes in recent years that have gone on for far too long, because the government refuses to ensure employers are at the bargaining table, ready to negotiate and bargain in good faith. A New Democrat government won't stand by while strikes last indefinitely and we'll ensure all of Ontario's labour laws are fair and put workers first.

### Health Care

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**6. Our publicly administered, universal health care system is cherished throughout Ontario. More of our health services, however, are being de-funded and privatized. What policies will your party implement to ensure that health care in the province remains under public control and is accessible to everyone?**

Ontarians are rightly proud of our public health care services. We count on them to be there when we need them; we want to know that everyone can get the care they need, when they need it. And we share a strong belief that care should be based on your health needs, not your ability to pay.

But those services are stretched to the limit, caregivers and health professionals are being asked to do more with less. After the drastic cuts of the Conservative years, and 15 years of neglect, frozen budgets and cuts under the Liberals, health care in Ontario is falling short of what families need.

Andrea Horwath and the NDP believe that delivering quality public health care is the most important thing our government does. It's time to start moving forward again, so Ontarians can expect more from the health services we've built together.

We will restore hospital funding and ensure it keeps pace every year with inflation, population growth, aging and the unique needs of communities. Funding will increase immediately by 5.3%.

We will make sure that hospitals have the staff they need to provide excellent patient care. That begins with bringing all stakeholders and partners to the table for a comprehensive review of staffing needs.

We will stop any further layoffs of nurses and front-line health care workers. We will take immediate steps to expand hospital capacity — starting with funding for 2,000 hospital beds now.

For the long term, we want to get it right. So we will bring health sector partners together to help us craft a comprehensive capacity plan — so we can build the capacity that hospitals need for our growing province. We will invest at least \$19 billion over 10 years in hospital capital expansion to meet growing capacity needs.

**7. There are more than 30,000 people in Ontario on waiting lists for long-term care beds, and hundreds of thousands are actively seeking but cannot find a family doctor. What will your party do to fund more doctors, nursing positions and hospital beds throughout the province?**

There are more than 32,000 people waiting for a home in long-term care. The wait is years long, that leaves some languishing in hospital beds and others living in a place where their safety isn't protected or their needs cared for. And too often, long-term care homes themselves are failing to protect the dignity, health and even the safety of the people who live there.

We will build and fund 15,000 more long-term care beds over the next five years — rising to 40,000 new beds by 2028. Our investment will focus on expanding the not-for-profit and municipal sector, where funding goes to patient care instead of profit. This will include investment in culturally-appropriate care: offering seniors greater access to care in their primary language, eating food they are familiar with, and engaging in activities they know and love.

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Andrea Horwath and the NDP will restore a legislated minimum standard of care for every long-term care resident in Ontario, and fund long-term care homes so they can meet it. That standard will require every long-term care home to give each resident a minimum of four hours of hands-on care every day.

The Ontario Association of NonProfit Homes and Services for Seniors, (now AdvantAge Ontario) estimates this will cost \$257 million a year. In our first 100 days in government, Andrea Horwath and the NDP will expand the mandate of the public inquiry into long-term care to find and fix the specific problems that have been stripping seniors of their dignity.

Finally, we will update Ontario's Long-Term Care Residents' Bill of Rights to include the right of spouses not to be separated against their will. Couples who have spent their entire lives together should never be separated by a system that doesn't work for them.

**8. Canada remains the only country in the world with a universal health care system that doesn't include prescription medication. Drug prices continue to skyrocket for Ontarians and more people have to choose between getting the medications they need and paying for necessities like food or rent. Will your party commit to creating a universal, comprehensive, publicly-administered and sustainable Pharmacare program in the province of Ontario?**

No one should ever go without the medication they need because of the cost. But for 2.2 million Ontarians, a prescription comes with a price tag — because they have no drug coverage at all. One quarter of Ontarians have not been taking the medicine they're prescribed because of the cost. And all too often, the result is a trip to an emergency room and a hospital stay. The result is a heavier toll on their own health, and higher costs for Ontario's health services.

Andrea Horwath and the NDP will make Ontario the first province with universal pharmacare by 2020 — so every Ontarian can get the medication they need. It will mean lower costs, less worrying and better health for everyone. And unlike the Liberal government's plan, nobody will be excluded.

Pharmacare will begin with universal coverage for approximately 125 essential medicines, chosen through an independent process led by the Committee to Evaluate Drugs. And we will work to expand the list quickly. Pharmacare will complement Ontario's existing public drug programs, so no one will lose any coverage that they currently have. We will allocate an annual budget of at least \$475 million for it.

### Education

**9. Only 20% of young children today have access to regulated child care spaces in Ontario. What will you do in government to create more child care spaces? Also, will you commit to creating a universal, public child care program for all children in the province?**

Nothing's more important than knowing your children have the best, safest care possible. But the cost of child care is priced far out of reach for too many Ontario parents. That has to change. Quality, affordable child care can make all the difference for working parents, offering peace of mind when they're at work earning a living, or at school gaining new skills and qualifications to help them get ahead. After 15 years of Liberal government promises, Ontario is Canada's most expensive province for child care, with Toronto parents paying most of all. And with vows to slash billions from the provincial budget, the Conservatives will only make things worse.

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We will phase in an affordable, province-wide child care plan, starting with care for infants and toddlers in the second year of our mandate, and preschoolers in the third year. We will base our plan and costs on the Ontario Coalition for Better Childcare's recommendations.

If your household income is under \$40,000, you won't have to pay for public, licensed, not-for-profit child care. If your household earns more, your fees will be based on ability to pay — with the average cost coming to \$12 per day. We will not reduce existing subsidies. Affordable child care will create significant new demand, requiring more Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) and high-quality, licensed, not-for-profit spaces.

We will immediately begin increasing the wages for ECEs to ensure people see this as a career that can support a family. We will expand the number of not-for-profit, licensed, affordable child care spaces in Ontario by 202,000 spaces — a 51% increase, adding more than 10% every year. We will work with school boards, community centres and public buildings to create new centres and spaces, with a priority on public schools.

### **10. What specific policies will your party implement to hire more teachers and reduce class sizes in primary and secondary schools in Ontario?**

Ontario funds public education based on a system developed by former Conservative premier Mike Harris. He didn't believe in strengthening public education — and the funding formula reflects that. Chronic underfunding has led to increased classroom violence, putting teachers, students and education workers at risk. With kindergarten classrooms having no cap on class size, classes are sometimes huge — and often understaffed.

The underfunding has been widespread enough that, since 2011, the Liberal government has closed 270 schools and put another 300 schools on the chopping block.

Andrea Horwath and the NDP will fund schools properly. We will work with parents, front-line educators, students, and educational experts to overhaul the education funding formula starting with a comprehensive public review based on two key principles: **equity and quality**.

A new funding formula will address violence in classrooms, and will mean boards, teachers, and education workers have the resources they need to ensure the well-being and safety of all learners, and all educators. It will allow us to curb class sizes and support our most vulnerable students, an important step in making classroom environments safer and more conducive to learning.

The first-hand experience of parents, teachers and education workers will play a major role in shaping the new model, and we will take into account factors that affect rural and remote schools, such as school transportation. School boards will be receiving funding under the fully-implemented new formula within our first term.

To make sure kindergarten students get the attention they need, we will cap kindergarten classrooms at 26 children and end Kindergarten / Grade 1 split classrooms. We will develop options for more Early Childhood Educators in full-day kindergarten classrooms.

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### **11. Ontario university student debt is now over \$850 million, and our province has the highest undergraduate tuition fees in the country, more than twice as high as Quebec and Manitoba. What will your party do to lower tuition fees and reduce student debt?**

Andrea Horwath and the NDP will address affordability head-on with a game-changing initiative: provincial loans for all new postsecondary students will become grants. Every student whose family is eligible for the Ontario Student Assistance Plan will graduate free of any debt to the province.

We will retroactively forgive all interest for everyone carrying provincial student loan debts. And graduates who have been harassed and threatened by private debt collectors for student loans can breathe easier. The province will no longer hire private debt collection services.

We'll end the financial constriction on colleges and universities by lifting the budget freeze. And we'll make sure funding keeps up, so post-secondary institutions can offer the choices and quality of instruction Ontario students deserve.

## **The Environment**

### **12. What policies will your party implement to reduce climate change and protect the environment, and how will you pay for them?**

Ontarians are proud of our natural heritage. And we know our well-being — economic, social and physical — relies on the health of our environment. We believe the transition to a green, low-carbon economy must be a fair one, so we don't leave communities behind, and so all of us can realize the benefits.

Renewables such as solar, water, and wind will be at the heart of the electricity system and we will integrate them responsibly as needs grow. We will respect local decision-making and ensure that local communities have a stake in the benefits that come from low-cost, zero-emission renewables.

We will continue with pricing carbon through a fair, effective and transparent cap-and-trade market. At least 25% of the revenues from cap-and-trade will support communities and individuals who today are carrying more than their fair share of the burden — such as northern, rural, and low-income Ontarians — and assist trade-exposed industries.

We will set clear greenhouse gas reduction targets that we can and will meet.

We will dedicate \$50 million in cap-and-trade revenues to seed the creation of a new no-interest/on-bill home-efficiency retrofit program, allowing residents to install energy conserving technologies and improve the energy efficiency of their home. We will target the program to communities and individuals facing the greatest financial barriers to lowering their energy use.

Andrea Horwath and the NDP will protect more of Ontario's wild spaces, by expanding existing parks and creating new ones in consultation with First Nations. We will end the loss of provincially significant wetlands, which are crucial in preventing and limiting floods, and begin to reverse it.

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We will update the Environmental Bill of Rights for the first time since the NDP introduced it more than two decades ago, to restore accountability, transparency, and public participation whenever the environment is affected.

### **13. One of the best ways to reduce our carbon footprint on the environment is public transportation. What will you do to make public transportation throughout the province more affordable and accessible to Ontarians?**

Andrea Horwath and the NDP will fund 50% of net transit and paratransit operating costs across Ontario. This funding will immediately allow transit operators to improve services, provide more equitable and affordable fares, and have the financial stability to experiment and pilot innovative solutions like the TTC's King Street Transit Pilot, timed transfers, low-income passes, and updated Ridership Growth Strategies. That means investing more than \$330 million in Toronto and over \$800 million across the province.

We will bring two-way all-day GO service between Kitchener–Waterloo and Toronto and year-round GO rail service between Niagara and Toronto. We will also electrify GO networks and the UP Express, and make sure GO planning integrates with density plans so we can take more cars off the road, lowering carbon emissions and speeding up commerce.

We will continue to build transit across Ontario. In Toronto we will make it a priority to fund and build the Downtown Toronto Relief Line. We will implement a Northern Rail Strategy, which will include getting Ontario Northlander's passenger service running, and supporting the Huron Central and Algoma Central Rail Lines. And we'll build Hamilton's long-awaited LRT, funding 50% of the operating costs.

We will direct Metrolinx to begin multilateral discussions with the federal government and local transit authorities focused on coordinating GO train and VIA Rail service with urban transit. That means fare integration, coordinated scheduling, joint funding, and even the possibility of shared rolling stock, so people paying a fare with PRESTO on GO or the Union Pearson Express for a trip within Toronto, or a GO trip of less than 10 km, will pay a \$3 fare.

We will update Ontario's Cycling Strategy, setting a specific goal for the number of trips by bicycle. The strategy will set out investment targets to improve cycling infrastructure across Ontario, with a particular focus on commuting routes. We will pass a Vulnerable Road Users' Law based on NDP Private Member's Bills, specifically designed to protect people such as cyclists and pedestrians.

We will require cities and municipalities to develop active transportation plans by 2021 that meet the needs and realities of their communities.